INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
HERITAGE ENHANCEMENT
AUTHENTICITY AND COMMUNICATIONS
TAROUDANT, 21ST – 23RD APRIL 2015
CALL FOR PAPERS
TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Local and/or sustainable development policies permeate and liven up the strategic orientations of countries of the Mediterranean basin today. Policy makers, NGOs and associations, businesses and citizens are actively involved in designing actions to enhance natural heritage, whether physical and virtual, that are threatened by various degradations, but remain at the same time, a source of hope regarding this development. In this respect, the preservation of sites, alternative forms of tourism, local crafts and local products are nowadays at the center of political and civil society actors, who multiply and diversify their approaches to territorial development with a single aim: enhancement.

In order to achieve this, actors of this enhancement mobilize/utilize various devices and mechanisms like events, local media, ICT, project management and/or territorial marketing and equip their arguments with singular notions presented as values - namely the search for authenticity and/or a return back to the local or home-grown. Everything is done to give the impression that territorial development is now synonymous with the qualification «authentic» inherent in places, products, know-how, crafts or touristic sites. At the same time, diversity of enhancement policies is assimilated more and more with a commercial logic. Thus, public and territorial communication is doubly mobilized, mainly through tourism communication so as to publicize authenticity including in its commercial dimension.

However, if public and territorial communication is at the heart of the problems of development and enhancement of the heritage, it is often, particularly in the Maghreb – neglected in development strategies and policies. The objective of this conference is to question the logic and equipments of this enhancement in the light of a notion as uncertain and as unstable as authenticity. The aim is to demonstrate how this field of authenticity produces multifaceted devices combining a patrimonialisation process; text, image or spatial setting; a dissemination of the knowledge and strategies of local actors; exhibitions or social networks exploited by digital technologies. The conference thus aims to analyze the role given to heritage and authenticity as both object and communication media through experiences of local, territorial and touristic development. This conference is also in line with the work of the multidisciplinary Euro-Mediterranean program “Languages, Objects, Territories and Hospitalities”¹ which have, in the specific context of the Maghreb, sought to question the utility of the emergence of a professionalization of territorial and public communication specialists in these countries (Constantine, 2011; Rabat and Djerba, 2012; Gabes and Bejaia, 2013). All these works and results from now on form one of the research themes of the observatory of knowledge circulation in the Mediterranean which develops research primarily oriented towards the Maghreb and which was initiated since 2013 within the Information, Environment, Media and Mediation (I3M) research lab at Nice and Toulon.

¹- See the research blog, available at: http://loth.hypotheses.org/
Paper proposals may focus on one of the following three issues:

A. Institutional Policies and enhancement of the heritage

Based on research and case studies relevant to the Mediterranean basin, the papers can shed light on the analysis of the institutional vision of heritage through programs and planning for touristic, cultural and agricultural development. The focus can also be on the different programs on the ground, mainly the results of the enhancement actions and the difficulties encountered. Indeed, the various actors of development involved in the enhancement of the heritage are faced with local constraints linked with to their own perceptions / or interpretation of what is or should be described as authentic, but also on new or social situations like post-revolutionary contexts, illiteracy, lack of mastery of digital technologies, tensions originating from collective or environmental situations, such as aridity, desertification, etc. This axis can equally analyze and classify the role of businesses in the enhancement of heritage, particularly in the context of Corporate Social Responsibility.

B. Authenticity in communication

The focus here is on the analysis of «authentic» heritage enhancement projects and the role as well as the constraints of territorial marketing, of IGAs (Income Generating Activities), of alternative tourism (agro-tourism, heritage and solidarity tourism, ecotourism, ...), commercialization of handicrafts and local products. The implementation of these «new» approaches in the Mediterranean area allows a confrontation of the enhancement approaches undertaken by the actors of regional development and the forms as well as the intentions of communication they prefer: event marketing, traditional media, advertising, Internet, social networks ... In fine, how do they define through these new approaches the authenticity of tourism sites, know-how, cultural practices, local products; what brands / authenticity markers are present in communication strategies, places and events (starting from tourism accommodation businesses, museum activity, architectural renovations, cultural events, regional labels, sites’ classifications, such as that carried by the UNESCO, to putting them in the form of scripts or pictures in guide books or any other tools of territorial mediation online).

C. Communication practices in institutions in charge of heritage enhancement

In order to improve the quality of services offered to citizens, development policies of cities in the Maghreb countries are setting up information systems allowing a smooth interoperability among different actors. However, despite the integration of digital technologies in the development of cities, the institutions responsible for heritage enhancement are struggling to get rid of cumbersome organizational bureaucracy, inherited, from a compartmentalized, hierarchical and bureaucratic logic. This situation affects the achievement of heritage enhancement actions and leads to lack of trust, tensions amongst development actors and citizens. In the process of heritage enhancement and for an understanding of the objectives of territorial development in the Maghreb, it is necessary to reconsider the communication strategies of such institutions more critically. Proposals can then focus on analyses of internal, external or institutional communication of associations, cooperatives, communal districts and delegations of tourism and culture. They may also address the relationship mechanisms operating between the actors and the public; thereby identifying the contributions and the limitations of the widespread use of digital technologies.
SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The Scientific committee will conduct double blind review of the papers.

Prospective authors should include:

An abstract up to 2500 characters in French or in English, five keywords, 3 to 5 bibliographical references, the choice of the thematic axis under which their proposal falls, name(s) of the author(s), affiliation(s), addresses (e-mail address, phone number, fax number)

Authors are required to submit their paper proposals to the following email:

colloqueTaroudant2014@gmail.com

IMPORTANT DATES

- July 11th, 2014: Deadline for submitting paper proposals
- September 1st, 2014: Reviews of the Scientific Committee
- December 31st, 2014: Deadline for submitting final papers
- December 31st, 2014: Reviews of the Scientific Committee
- March 15th, 2015: The Scientific Committee will get back to the authors about the conference proceedings

The best papers will be sent to the editorial board of the International Journal Communiquer, Revue de Communication Sociale et Publique, for a special issue publication.

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CONTACTS AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION
Conference venue: Taroudant Multidisciplinary Faculty: http://www.fpt.ac.ma/
Registration and participation fees are to be paid by March 15th, 2015; they include accommodation and meals from April 21st - 23rd, 2015.